

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 00288 041921Z

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ACTION TRSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8764

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 0288

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, TD

SUBJECT: CUSTOMS AND DEA ASSISTANCE TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REF: STATE 013468 (NOTAL)

1. OUR COMMENTS IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF PORT OF SPAIN 0003 WERE BASED ON SEVERAL EXPERIENCES. THERE WAS LACK OF FOLLOW-UP ON IMPLIED COMMITMENTS OF MATERIALS PROMISED IN A MEETING BETWEEN U.S. CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AND TRINIDADIAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS ON AUGUST 1. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN ASKED SEVERAL TIMES BY THE TRINIDADIANS WHEN THEY COULD EXPECT THE SUPPORT OFFERED BY THE U.S. CUSTOMS REPRESENTATIVES. IN EARLY NOVEMBER THE PROMISED NARCOTICS DETECTION KITS WERE RECEIVED BUT NOT THE OTHER MATERIAL. THEREFORE, WE SENT A TICKLER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY, WITH AN INFORMATION COPY TO YOU (PORT OF SPAIN 3089 OF DECEMBER 30, 1975). WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED A REPLY TO THAT INQUIRY; BUT IN THE MEANTIME YOUR REFERENCED TELEGRAM INFORMED US CONCERNING THE ITEMS PROMISED. THE SLIDES AND TRAINING MATERIALS HAVE JUST BEEN RECEIVED (FIVE AND A HALF MONTHS AFTER THEY WERE PROMISED) AND HAVE BEEN DELIVERED. WE HAVE INFORMED THE TRINIDADIANS THAT THE REMAINING ITEMS WILL HOPEFULLY BE READY IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

2. CONCERNING OUR SUGGESTION THAT THERE BE CLOSER CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN CUSTOMS AND DEA OFFICIALS ABROAD, IT HAS BEEN OUR EXPERIENCE THAT THE TWO TRAINING PROGRAMS ON NARCOTICS OVERLAP. THE ONE ALREADY PRESENTED BY DEA IN UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 PORT O 00288 041921Z

TRINIDAD AND THE CCINC PROGRAM III IN-COUNTRY PROGRAM

SUGGESTED BY THE U.S. CUSTOMS OFFICERS IN AUGUST WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS BASICALLY COVER THE SAME TERRITORY ON IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL OF NARCOTICS. THE DEA COURSE HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN TO SOME TRINIDAD CUSTOMS OFFICIALS. WHEN THE CUSTOMS COURSE WAS OFFERED AND AT THE TIMES IT HAS BEEN DISCUSSED, THERE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN NO COORDINATION WITH OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEA TRAINING HELD HERE. WE ASKED FOR SUCH COORDINATION AND ASSURANCES THAT EACH ORGANIZATION UNDERSTOOD THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE OTHER, BUT NO REASSURANCE WAS FORTHCOMING. DISTINCE IMPRESSION CONVEYED TO LOCAL OFFICIALS AS WELL AS TO THIS EMBASSY HAS BEEN OF TWO PARALLEL PROGRAMS EXISTING WITH LITTLE CROSS-COMMUNICATION AND LESS COORDINATION OF EFFORT.

3. LAST YEAR DEA DISCUSSED WITH US THE POSSIBILITY OF A FOLLOW-UP TO THEIR INITIAL COURSE, WHICH WOULD INCLUDE FURTHER TRAINING OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS. THIS HAS NOT YET BEEN ARRANGED. IT IS FOR THIS REASON WE BELIEVE THAT A CLOSELY COORDINATED PROGRAM ON NARCOTICS IN THE FILED BETWEEN DEA AND THE U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE WOULD PRESENT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE AND BETTER ORGANIZED U.S. GOVERNMENT EFFORT AGAINST THIS PRIORITY TARGET.

4. THE EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO POINT OUT NEED FOR COORDINATION OF USG INTERACTION WITH T&T GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WHERE NECESSARY.
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